

**Amendments to the Specification and Abstract**

**In the Specification:**

Before paragraph [0002], please insert the heading --BACKGROUND--.

At the bottom of page 1, please delete the heading “ REPLACEMENT SHEET (RULE 26)”.

Before paragraph [0012], please insert new paragraph [0011.1] as follows:

--[0011.1] United Kingdom Patent Application GB 2 179 214 A describes an overvoltage protection system which is composed of one or more cylindrical gas discharge tubes. Main electrodes are disposed at the two outer ends of a cylindrical gas discharge tube and, in addition, an ignition electrode is disposed co-axially in the interior space between the two electrodes as an ignition aid. To be able to wire two active phase conductors, a plurality of these cylindrical gas discharge tubes are connected together axially. The method described here does not allow wiring of more than two active phase conductors because the centric arrangement of the one ignition electrode can only operate for the external electrodes of the active phase conductors.--.

Before paragraph [0013], please insert the heading --SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--.

Please replace paragraph [0014] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0014] ~~The~~ In the multipole overvoltage protection system according to the present invention, ~~in which the above-described objective is achieved, is first of all and essentially characterized in that~~ the individual overvoltage protection elements are coupled to each other in such a manner

that when one overvoltage protection element is ignited, all other overvoltage protection elements are ignited as well.

Please replace paragraph [0019] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0019] In ~~a particularly preferred practical~~ an embodiment of the multipole overvoltage protection system according to the present invention, all overvoltage protection elements and, if applicable, all ignition aids are located in a common housing, thus integrating the multipole overvoltage protection system as a multipole overvoltage protection device. In this context, the individual overvoltage protection elements preferably have a first electrode, a second electrode, and an air breakdown spark gap present or acting between the electrodes; the electrodes of the individual overvoltage protection elements being arranged with respect to each other such that when the air breakdown spark gap of one overvoltage protection element is ignited, the air breakdown spark gaps of other overvoltage protection elements are ignited as well because of the plasma which is then present.

Please replace paragraph [0021] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0021] In the initially described method for the reliable operation of a multipole overvoltage protection system in a multiphase power supply system, in particular, in a low voltage system, where the overvoltage protection system has at least two overvoltage protection elements which are each arranged in a leg of the power supply system, ~~the aforementioned objective is achieved~~ according to the present invention, ~~in that~~ when a single overvoltage protection element is ignited, all other overvoltage protection elements are ignited as well.

Before paragraph [0023], please insert the heading --BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS--.

Please replace paragraph [0023] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0023] Specifically, the multipole overvoltage protection system and the method for the reliable operation of a multipole overvoltage protection system according to the present invention can be embodied and refined in many ways. In this regard, on the one hand, reference is made to the patent claims ~~that are subordinate to Patent Claims 1 and 12~~ and, on the other hand, to the following description of preferred exemplary embodiments in conjunction with the drawing, in which

Figure 1 shows two simplified circuit diagrams of a multipole overvoltage protection system known in the prior art for two different network configurations;

Figure 2 shows a simplified circuit diagram of a first exemplary embodiment of a multipole overvoltage protection system according to the present invention;

Figure 3 shows a simplified circuit diagram of a second exemplary embodiment of a multipole overvoltage protection system according to the present invention;

Figure 4 shows a simplified circuit diagram of a third exemplary embodiment of a multipole overvoltage protection system according to the present invention; and

Figure 5 is a partially sectional view of an exemplary embodiment of a multipole overvoltage protection device of the present invention according to the circuit diagram of Fig. 4.

Before paragraph [0024], please insert the heading --DETAILED DESCRIPTION--.

Please replace paragraph [0031] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0031] Fig. 4 shows the circuit diagram of another embodiment of a multipole overvoltage protection system ~~which has been further improved, and~~ in which not only the individual ignition circuits 13 have been replaced by a central ignition circuit 13', but in which, moreover, just one central ignition electrode 12' is provided instead of individual ignition electrodes 12 so that the multipole overvoltage protection system has only one central ignition aid 6' in total.

Please replace paragraph [0033] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0033] Fig. 5 shows ~~a practical~~ an embodiment of a multipole overvoltage protection system, in which the individual electrodes  $9_{L1}$ ,  $9_{L2}$ ,  $9_{L3}$ ,  $9_N$  and  $10_{PE}$  and the common ignition electrode 12' are located in a housing 8, altogether forming a multipole overvoltage protection device 7. In this context, the individual electrodes  $9_{L1}$ ,  $9_{L2}$ ,  $9_{L3}$ ,  $9_N$  and  $10_{PE}$  and the common ignition electrode 12' are arranged coaxially with respect to each other, and each have a circular cross-section. Alternatively, the individual electrodes  $9_{L1}$ ,  $9_{L2}$ ,  $9_{L3}$ ,  $9_N$  and  $10_{PE}$  and the common ignition electrode 12' can also have an oval or rectangular cross-section. In this context, it is particularly advantageous if the individual electrodes  $9_{L1}$ ,  $9_{L2}$ ,  $9_{L3}$ ,  $9_N$  and  $10_{PE}$  and the common ignition electrode 12' have different cross-sections over their length so that the individual electrodes  $9_{L1}$ ,  $9_{L2}$ ,  $9_{L3}$ ,  $9_N$  and  $10_{PE}$  and the common ignition electrode 12' are stepped in cross-section over their length, which allows the location of the region that is intended to act as air breakdown spark gap 11 to be predetermined in a special way.

Please replace paragraph [0034] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0034] The interior space of housing 8, which preferably has a pressure-tight and pressure-resistant design, has a lining 14 which is composed, in particular, of POM-Teflon. In order to further improve the pressure tightness of housing 8, the housing can be enclosed by an outer pressure cylinder ~~(not shown here)~~ 18. Finally, it is also shown in Fig. 5 that a hole 15 is formed

in the electrode  $9_N$  of the neutral conductor N. This hole 15 permits pressure equalization within housing 8 in that it allows plasma to escape from the region of air breakdown spark gaps 11 (in Fig. 5 the region to the right of electrode  $9_N$ ) to a region (in Fig. 5 the region to the left of electrode  $9_N$ ) where the electrodes  $9_{L1}$ ,  $9_{L2}$ ,  $9_{L3}$ ,  $9_N$  and  $10_{PE}$  are spaced further apart because of their stepped cross-section over their length.

**In the Abstract:**

Please replace the Abstract with the following rewritten Abstract:

~~The invention relates to a multipole overvoltage protection system for a polyphase power supply network. The inventive system comprises four overvoltage protection elements (1), one overvoltage protection element (1) being arranged in each branch (2, 3, 4, 5) of the power supply network. According to the invention, a multipole overvoltage protection system which can be reliably operated and has a simple structure can be created by coupling the individual overvoltage elements to each other in such a way that when one overvoltage protection element (1) is started, all of the other overvoltage protection elements (1) are also started.~~

A multipole overvoltage protection system for a multiphase power supply system includes a first overvoltage protection element connected in a first leg of the power supply system and a second overvoltage protection element connected in a second leg of the power supply system. The second overvoltage protection element is coupled to the first overvoltage protection element so that the second overvoltage protection element ignites when the first overvoltage protection element ignites and the first overvoltage protection element ignites when the second overvoltage protection element ignites.